



DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

News Release

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GOVERNOR

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SHARK BITE, INCREASED SHARK SIGHTINGS CALL FOR CAUTION

HONOLULU – The Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) urges all water users to exercise caution when going into the ocean. The current reports of large sharks in Hawai‘i’s nearshore waters and the shark bite of a surfer yesterday (September 9) are the cause for this recommendation.

“Do not enter the water where shark warning signs are posted; in all other areas please exercise caution when entering the water,” stated Laura H. Thielen, DLNR Chairperson.

Although there is no definitive explanation for increased shark presence in nearshore waters, experienced fishermen and scientists know that some shark species come into shallower waters during this time of year for pupping, which increases the chances of interaction between sharks and people.

Yesterday, a surfer was attacked by a shark off of Kahana Bay, Oahu. Other incidents within the past year include:

July 25, 2008, a woman snorkeling off Makaha, O‘ahu was bitten,
December 2007, in Kaiaka, O‘ahu a surfer was bit by a shark while on his surfboard,
October 2007, in Kihei, Maui a swimmer was bit on the leg by a shark, and
About a year ago, another surfer was bitten on the foot near Kahana Bay.

Due to Tuesday’s shark attack Kahana State Beach Park is closed and water entry is prohibited. The beach and water access will remain closed for the rest of the day until an assessment this evening to determine whether to open the beach or issue orders to keep the beach closed.

The public is strongly urged to heed the following precautionary measures:

1. Swim, surf, or dive with other people, and don't move too far away from assistance.
2. Stay out of the water at dawn, dusk and night, when some species of sharks may move inshore to feed.
3. Do not enter the water if you have open wounds or are bleeding in any way. Sharks can detect blood and body fluids in extremely small concentrations.
4. Avoid murky waters, harbor entrances, and areas near stream mouths (especially after heavy rains), channels or steep drop-offs. These types of waters are known to be frequented by sharks.
5. Do not wear high-contrast clothing or shiny jewelry. Sharks see contrast very well.
6. Refrain from excessive splashing; keep pets, which swim erratically, out of the water. Sharks are known to be attracted to such activity.
7. Do not enter the water if sharks are known to be present. Leave the water quickly and calmly if one is sighted. Do not provoke or harass a shark, even a small one.
8. If fish or turtles start to behave erratically, leave the water. Avoid swimming near dolphins, as they are prey for some large sharks.
9. Remove speared fish from the water or tow them a safe distance behind you. Do not swim near people fishing or spear fishing. Stay away from dead animals in the water.
10. Swim or surf at beaches patrolled by lifeguards and follow their advice.

Finally, if you see a shark, or have been injured by one, call 911.

There have been a number of sightings recently off the West Coast of the Big Island:

**indicates sighting occurred on the East Coast.

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| August 26, 2008 – | Confirmed sighting of a 10-12 foot shark at the boat moorings in Anaeho'omalua Bay. DLNR enforcement and Waikoloa Marriott personnel posted warning signs. |
| ** August 30, 2008 – | Missing swimmer reported off Puna, Hawai'i (MacKenzie State Park, East Hawai'i); search attempts encounter presence of a large shark, reputed to be a Great White shark. |
| September 2, 2008 – | Assessments confirmed shark sighting, very close to shore, near Hapuna Beach (beach closed but park remained open). Later that afternoon: confirmed shark sighting very close to shore. Waialea Bay section of the State Park beaches were closed but park remained open. |
| September 3, 2008 – | An early morning flyover of the Hapuna area showed no sharks; beaches and parks opened. Later that morning confirmed shark sightings at Kukio (off 4 Seasons, Kona Village) and Mauna Kea Beach Resort. Due to these sighting Spencer County Beach Park water access was closed. |
| September 6, 2008 – | Assessments confirmed shark sighting at Hapuna Beach (park open, beach closed). Beach at Waialea Bay section of State Park also closed. |

- September 8, 2008 – Assessments confirmed school of sharks feeding on a school of fish off Mauna Kea Beach resort. Three beach parks closed (Hapuna, Waialea Bay, Spencer County Beach Park water access prohibited).
- September 9, 2008 – Confirmed shark sighting off the Mauna Kea Beach Resort; three beach parks were closed (Hapuna, Waialea entire SRA closed; Spencer County Beach Park water access prohibited).
- September 10, 2008 – Confirmed shark sightings between Maumae Beach and Kawaihae Harbor; three beach parks were closed (Hapuna, Waialea entire SRA closed; Spencer County Beach Park closed for routine maintenance through Friday).

Sightings of sharks have also been reported at Hanalei Bay on Kauaʻi.

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